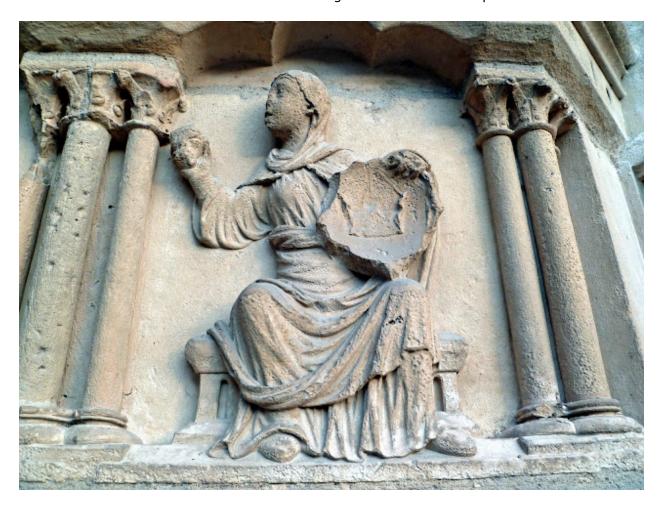
1st December 2012

The Stone and the Athanor

Good morning,

I continue with this article the study of the hermetic medallions of the facade of Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris. Here below is the first medallion which is located on the right side of the central portal of the cathedral.



[http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-3RhcR1Vkx3w/UKK3uUbcbRl/AAAAAAACGs/3rQu1DihYPl/s1600/La+Pierre+et+l%27Athanor.JPG]

Hermetic medallion " The Stone and the Athanor" of Notre-Dame de Paris

Let's look at the image above:

We can see the protagonist who presents on the one hand the Athanor which is on his left knee and on the other hand contemplates the Stone which he was able to isolate and which he holds in his right hand.

Note that **the Athanor** [http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2011/01/la-guerre-by-janequin-2008-prom_13.html] is shown in longitudinal section and that we see here the interior of the oven.

That is to say that thanks to the first stage with " The Raven [http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2012/05/le-corbeau.html] " the protagonist has reached a beginning of awareness: the separation of the pure and the impure.

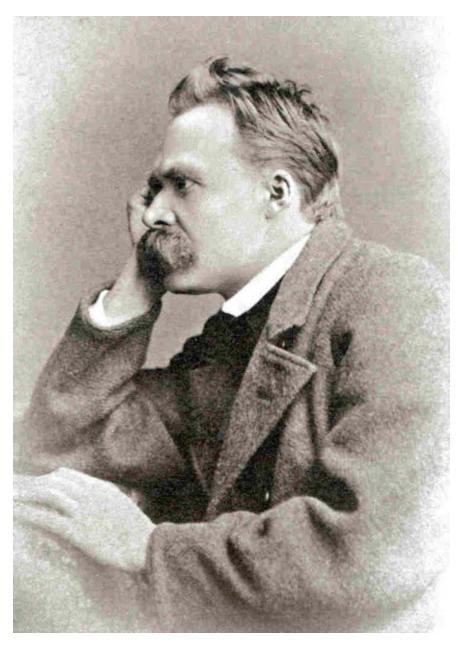
It is in the interior of oneself, which is symbolically represented by the Athanor, that one should seek the divine spark, the cornerstone of the temple to be built.

The athanor will be used to cook The Philosophers' [http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2012/08/loeuf-des-philosophes.html] Egg [http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2012/08/loeuf-des-philosophes.html] .

Distinguishing the Stone from the Athanor is an essential step. This amounts to saying distinguishing the "Self" or the "Totality" from its " Inner Strength " which lives in us .

This distinction is only possible through humility but also through psychological structuring . It is established essentially thanks to the establishment of the function of transcendence that we have already mentioned on several occasions .

Some men , for not having made the distinction between *Pierre* and *Athanor* , sank. Of course the terms "Peter" and "Athanor" can be formulated differently , the result remains the same . To cite just one example, **Friedrich Nietzsche** is representative of such a failure. This man was literally swallowed up by his work and led an existence without relief. There is such a contrast between the myth of the "Superman" and the mediocre life of its author that Nietzsche is a small philosopher without great stature. Its philosophy turns out to be very weak and it is certainly not for nothing that it is, in the words of **Alfred Adler** , associated with the pathology of the "all power" of the dictatorships of the 20th century . These paranoid dictatorships , in addition to the immense human tragedies that characterize them , are indeed , if I may say so sadly, "all powerless" .



[http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-

qpbUHyOfyI0/UKVNMjfuOnI/AAAAAAAACNI/H0OVrRzAdfs/s1600/Friedrich+Nietzsche.jpg]

Friedrich Nietzsche

Here is an extract from the alchemical treatise "Atalanta Fugitive" by Michael Maïer: The XX X II emblem, "As coral grows under water and hardens in the air, so does the Stone".

Michael Maier writes:

"Under the Sicilian waves grows a soft plant Whose branches, by the warmth of the waters, multiply. The Cora is its name; it appears hardened When Borée, from the harsh pole, launches the frost. Changed into a branching stone It is red and similar to the Physical Stone."



[http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-JIRKRfTmCVw/ULpRJbifFel/AAAAAAAACYU/5X6wFbddYa4/s1600/Michael+Ma%C3%AFer+-+Atalante+Fugitive+-+1618+-+Embl%C3%A8me+XXXII+-+Fuga.jpeg]



[http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-YAsmLMMoDPE/ULpRYc7601I/AAAAAAAACYc/I7co8-li8eQ/s1600/Michael+Ma%C3%AFer+-+Atalante+Fugitive+-+1618+-+Embl%C3%A8me+XXXII.jpeg]

"As coral grows under water and hardens in the air, so does the Stone" Emblem XX X II - "Atalante Fugitive" by Michael Maïer

Let's look at the picture above:

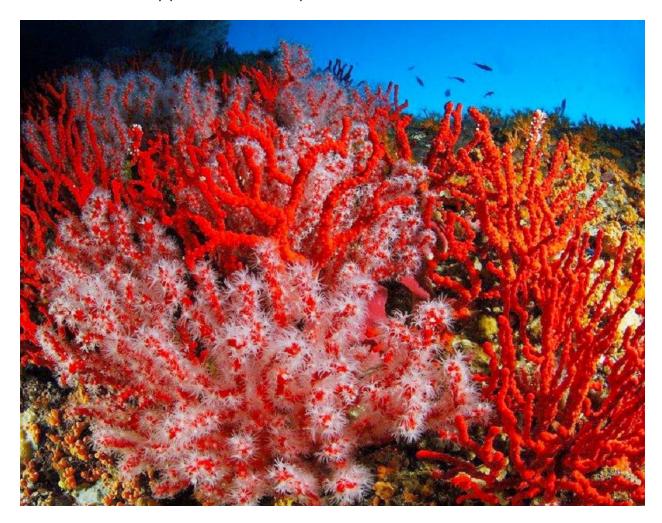
Here we see the protagonist extracting the **Coral** , that is to say the coagulated philosophical Sulphur , from the river . Of course water represents the unconscious . Michel Maïer initially equates the Philosopher's Stone with Coral. This name only emphasizes the intermediate aspect of this stage . The sea coral tree symbolizes the union of earth, sea, fire and air

The 18th century French philosopher **Pernety** mentions in his dictionary that the Coral of the philosophers was formed from the blood of the wound that **P erseus with made to Medusa** (see article **La** Cohobation (1) [http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2012/05/la-cohobation.html] | [http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2012/05/la-cohobation.html] | [http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2012/05/la-cohobation.html]

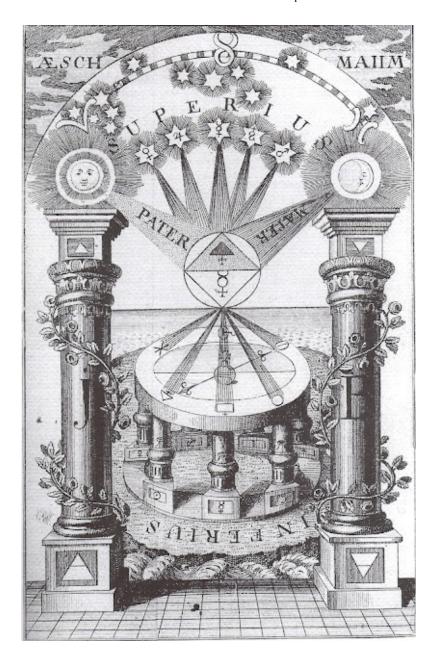
The separation of the philosophical Coral from the mercurial Water is a difficult operation. It is a stage in the process of individuation. It is in fact a question of distinguishing the soul from the unconscious.

Notice in the sky the wind, the masculine principle, which blows and which can harden the Stone. Michael Maïer warns to "cut the coral under water, in order to avoid losing its juice and its blood". He warns on the other

hand that an excess of humidity prevents the development of the Stone.



 $[http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-CQdwe_XZrFw/VF9sPIF1Dul/AAAAAAAAIUM/B4RhsFTrTf8/s1600/Corail\%2Brouge.jpg] \\$



[http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-81Z8FKC_Ep4/ULpCCJvF5ll/AAAAAAAACVk/t5MtulhS1Nk/s1600/La+Bousole+des+Sages+-+Berlin+-+1782.jpeg]

"The Compass of the Wise" - 1782

Let's look at the image above:

Here we see the two columns of the Temple of **Solomon** which illustrate **the** two male and female principles. Above the left one is the **Sun** and above the right one the **Moon** . From these two stars radiate the paternal and maternal functions .

A triangle on the left column of which one side of the sides is placed on the ground represents the association of **Fire** and **Air**, elements from an **essentially** masculine symbolic point of view. **An inverted triangle on its** top represents the association of **Earth and** Water, essentially feminine elements. These two triangles when joined together illustrate the seal of S alomon.

Note that these two columns are not unrelated to the representation **of the sephiroth tree** in traditional Kabbalah.

At the top, " Aesch", symbolizes the masculine principle (and means "Fire") and "Maïm" symbolizes the feminine principle (and means "Water") combine to generate the Philosopher's Stone. This integrates the higher

and lower energies, that is to say the five planets of the sky (Saturn, Jupiter, Venus, Mars and Mercury) as well as the five material components (Tartar, sulphur, salt of ammonia, vitriol, saltpeter) At the center of these five components, **Antimony**, basic ingredient of the material aspect of the Stone on which I will come back because it can be both the most dangerous poison and the most effective remedy.

Below is an allegory of the alchemical creation of the philosopher's stone:



[http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-

 $SxCrhyKskoE/UdBAHGb0Jul/AAAAAAAAGIg/9ONJ7_wfH44/s1600/Alchimiste+en+pri%C3\%A8re+-+Speculium+Sophicum+Rhodostauroticum+de+T+Schweighart+-+1604.jpeg]$

Praying Alchemist - Speculium Sophicum Rhodostauroticum T Schweighart - 1604

Let's look at the image above:

In the center on a pedestal the **young girl** personifies the "Vase" or receptacle in which the alchemical cooking takes place. We would say in contemporary psychological language that it is the *"introverted pole"* of the individual. It is the *Virgo gravida* or "Pregnant Virgin" of the philosophers.

On the pedestal the Latin inscription *Hinc sapientia* means "Here is wisdom" or "This is wisdom". This girl is carrying a **child** in her womb. This inscription therefore refers to the alchemical maxim: "The wisdom of the father is found in the bosom of the mother."

Notice that this child is related to the **Sun** and the **Moon** which are his true parents (*Filus solis et lunae*). This is the meaning of the fourth paragraph of the **Emerald Table**: "His father is the Sun, and his mother is the Moon. The wind carried him in her womb, and the earth nourished him with her milk."

The child is a symbol of *Lapis* or the stone of the philosophers. Notice that it is surrounded by fire, ie it shines with light. It is a representation of "matter" which over the transmutations of the work is purified in the still (inside). It is a representation of the **Self** constituted by **the union of the Me** (spiritus / will), **the Anima** (inside socius / affectivity) and the It (corpus / drive) It is the equivalent of the Indian Atman purusha or the Inner Christ.

At the bottom are illustrated the **two** main **ways** or steps to obtain the stone. On the left, an alchemist who extracts the stone from water (*the wet way*); On the right, an alchemist in front of his stove who uses fire (*the dry way*). Notice in the bottom of the left cavern a sun appears above the waters which illustrates the imminent result of the adept's research. On the other side the alchemist in the cavern on the right holds tight to his heart a retort or hermetic vessel.

At the top, an **alchemist** or philosopher is represented praying to the creator. Indeed, all the treatises testify that it is not possible to achieve the great work without work <u>and</u> prayer. This is the meaning of the expression **Ora et labora**, "pray and work". Note that the alchemist prays here under a tent which is clearly an allusion to the stay of the Hebrew people in the desert. The Latin words *cum deo* under this last character in the illustration means "with God". It is certainly impossible and just aberrant to want to achieve anything without the help of God.

Below the medallion of "the Stone and the Athanor" the philosophers and alchemists of the twelfth century placed the medallion of the entrance to the sanctuary :



[http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-FlsJ3DuYtnl/UKK8nsKi21l/AAAAAAAACJM/yad_Fw99Cc8/s1600/L%27entr%C3%A9e+dans+le+Sanctuaire.JPG]

Hermetic medallion "Entry into the sanctuary" of Notre-Dame de Paris

Let's look at the image above:

Here we see the protagonist entering a shrine. That is to say, it is a question here of isolating oneself from the world for a certain period of time.

The door is symbolically an access route to something else. It marks the separation between the sacred world and the profane world.

It is a transitory phase for the continuation of the black work. It is for the protagonist to pursue the awareness of the organization and the functioning of his motivations. See the articles **The Cohobation (1)** [http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2012/05/la-cohobation.html] and **The Cohobation (2)** [http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2012/06/la-cohobation-2.html].

The stage of isolation in the sanctuary is necessary to prepare the sequel: the isolation of Mercury and Sulphur, that is to say the singularization of the archetype of the *anima* or the *animus*.

About doors notice the names of famous alchemical treatises: "The twelve doors of alchemy" by George Ripley; "The Open Entrance to the Closed Palace of the King" from Philalète; "The Twelve Keys to Philosophy" by Brother Basile Valentin.

Here is the extract from the alchemical treatise "Atalanta Fugitive" by Michael Maïer :

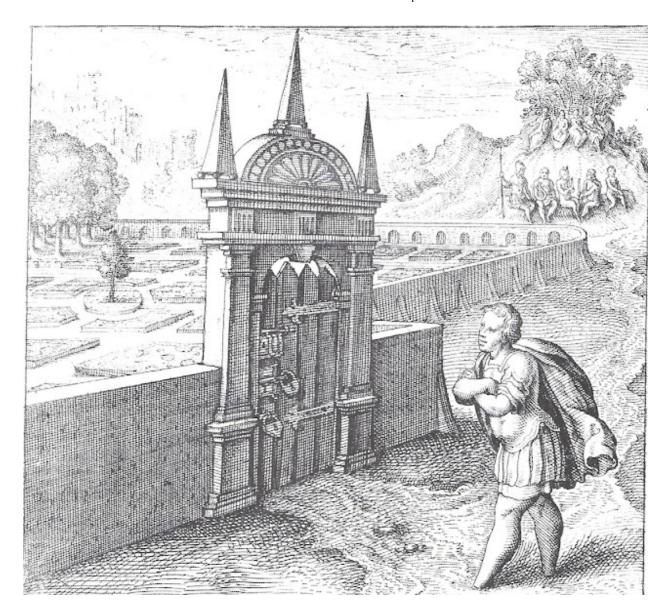
Emblem XXVII, "He who tries to enter the Rose Garden of the Philosophers without a key is like a man trying to walk without feet".

Michael Maier writes:

"The Rose Garden of the Wise is adorned with a thousand flowers,
But powerful bolts still close the door.
Its unique key is, for everyone, vile thing:
If you don't have it, you want to run without your legs.
You face in vain the slopes of Parnassus
When on the level ground you stand with great difficulty."



[http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-YJrE4aRudll/ULpIDBp2XpI/AAAAAAAACZ0/BqugHmvYm5I/s1600/Michael+Ma%C3%AFer+-+Atalanta+Fugiens+-+1618+-+Embl%C3%A8me+XXVII+-+Fuga.jpeg]



[http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-ULHoJ2Wh8xw/UKaKqkq9Vkl/AAAAAAAACOc/-smJxy5NOKE/s1600/Michael+Ma%C3%AFer+-+Atalanta+Fugiens+-+1618+-+Embl%C3%A8me+XXVII.jpg]

"Whoever tries to enter the Rose Garden of the Philosophers without a key is like a man trying to walk without feet"

Emblem XX V II - " Atalante Fugitive" by Michael Maïer

Let 's observe the image above:

We see a man unable to enter the garden of the philosophers because he does not have the keys , ie the necessary knowledge. Indeed, a certain knowledge is required to be able to open the locks. It is up to the follower to acquire the knowledge of clean matter, that is to say, to cleanse it of all impurity.

It is said that the gate was locked three times, like the three stages of the work . (Nigredo, Albedo, Rubedo) Notice the three spikes at the above the door which symbolize the three different fires necessary for the work . These three fires are symbolized in the background on the right by the three muses under the trees at the top of Parnassus . Among the other characters a little lower on the Parnassus we can notice Mercury but alsoPan, aGodofNature

This man has not acquired this knowledge, he is deprived of his feet and barely able to walk.

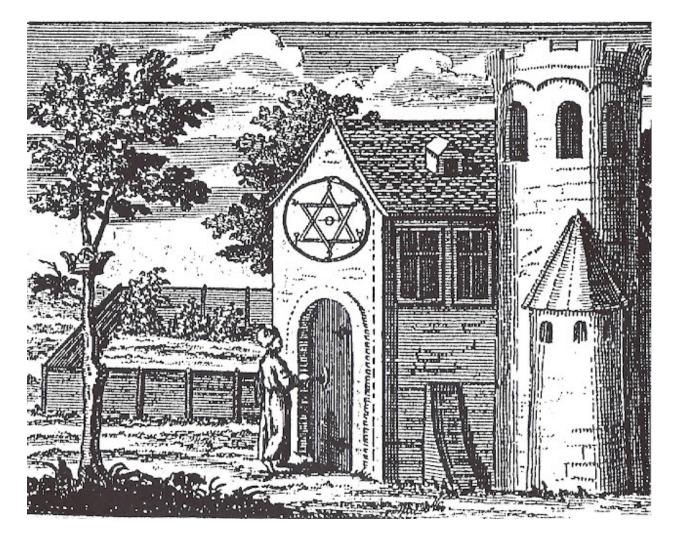
The garden of courseisarepresentation of the unconscious with all the treasures it contains. The feet are what allow us to stand and assure us of contact with fundamental reality .

The feet also symbolically refer us to the myth of **Oedipus** (see article **Oedipus** [http://aquapermanens.blogspot.fr/2011/12/oedipe.html]) and/or that of **Achilles**, of which this part of the body is vulnerable.

Michael Maïerexplicitly states in his treatise that whoever"takes possession of the key, it will be easy for him to open the front door. At the very entrance he will see**Venus**..."



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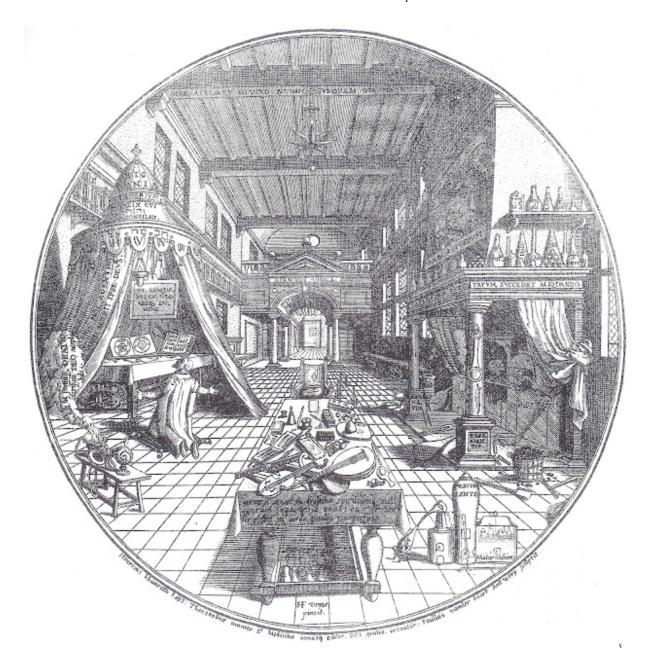
eDiyQttdAE0/ULpMcmPkjgl/AAAAAAAACW8/L9soUVEUynE/s1600/Le+philosophe+herm%C3%A9tique+ou+la+ma%C3%AEtresse+cl %C3%A9+-+Vienne+-+1709.jpeg]

"The hermetic philosopher or the key mistress" - Vienna - 1709

Let's look at the image above:

The philosopher enters with the key .

Above the door of the residence the union of the two triangles symbols of the masculine (Fire and Air) and feminine (Earth and Water) principles. Notice at the extremities of each angle of the triangles the symbols of the six planets or metals necessary for the Opus.



[http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-xl4FLmGLmeY/UKLMaVNhp-l/AAAAAAAACKg/u92vb4cZwiE/s1600/Heinrich+Khunrath+-+Le+Laboratoire.jpeg]

"Amphitheatrum sapientia aeternae" - " Amphitheater of Eternal Wisdom " Heinrich Khunrath - 1602 - Image 3

Take a look at the image above:

We distinguish on this illustration the two aspects of the work of the alchemist: On the one hand on the right **the study** and on the other hand on the left **the prayer** .

The word *La botorium* which is inscribed above the fireplace at the top left perfectly illustrates these two aspects. *Labor* means work, study, and *oratorium* refers to oratory and oration .

On the left an alchemist is kneeling before his tabernacle. Above him the inscription reads:"Blessed is he who follows the counsels of the Lord." "Don't talk about God without his lights." "When we stick strictly to our work, God is with us."

The help of God is indeed indispensable to the success of the work and it would be necessary to be foolish not to take it into account. On the other hand, on the bases of the columns of the chimney we can read *Ratio et Exp e*

riment ia which means "reason" and "experience". In Alchemy, deductions follow practice and experimentation, especially as the realization of the work

turns out to be a highly personal process.

It is a question here of going beyond the unreal stateto which both repeated prayer in the oratoryandassiduous study in thelaboratory. It is a question of leaving one's false illusions and returning as an "actor" to one 's real dimension.

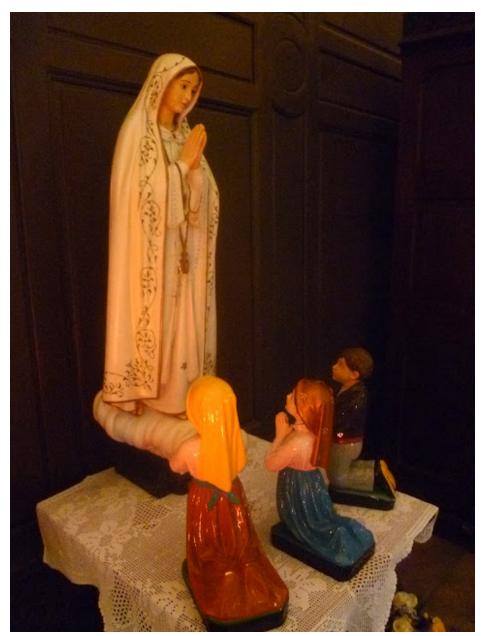
In the background in the background, we can read above the door: "Stay alert, even in your sleep!"

Notice on the central table, books, a balance and stringed musical instruments on the table. The role of music, I can't point it out enough,s harmonics of chords but also its melodic superpositions in counterpoint, accompanies and acts on the realization of the work.

Also note the stove in the foreground which invites patience, a virtue so necessary to the artist: "Hasten slowly!"

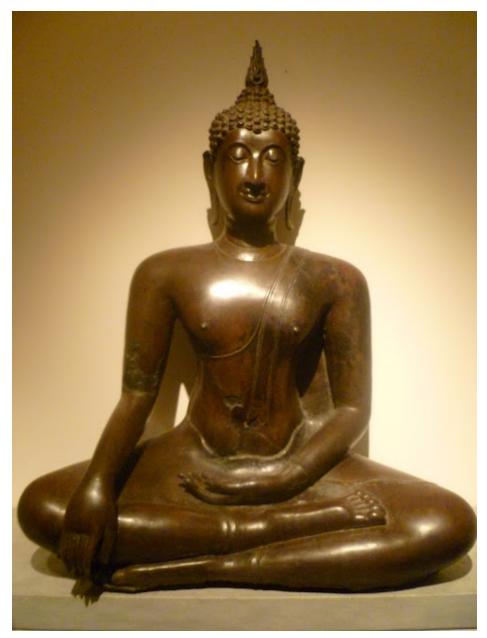
Any haste is a bad adviser.

For more details on the symbolism of music read the articles: The Music of the Spheres [http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2011/01/les-12-signes-du-zodiaque-2.html] and Self-Esteem [http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2011/01/ramon-pipins-odeurs-je-maime.html]



[http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-eTRLTxputq0/ULUXBy7XAnl/AAAAAAACP0/mOfY2TFlbss/s1600/Pri%C3%A8re+-+Marie.JPG]

Virgin and children praying - Old church of Provins



[http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-

ExTbuGQaOBA/ULUh4Ow-GKI/AAAAAAAACSg/X_vv4pzqK-4/s1600/Bouddha.JPG]

Buddha in meditation - Guimet Museum - Paris



[http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-BRBzjvzuxUQ/ULUqL-imghl/AAAAAAAACUM/gW5UqWXpxUw/s1600/Enguerrand+Quarton+-Le+couronnement+de+la+Vierge+-+1453+1454.jpg]

Enguerrand Quarton - The Coronation of the Virgin - 1453 1454 Villeneuve-les-Avignon Museum

Let's look at the image above:

We see the **Virgin** welcomed into heaven by the Trinity (*Father, Son and Holy Spirit*). The Coronation of the Virgin is a representation of the intermediate phase of the great work. We see that here the Virgin is welcomed as a fourth divine person. The whole: *Father, Virgin Mary, Son* and *Holy Spirit* constitutes a "quaternity", that is to say a totality. This totality of the universe includes the Earth and notice on the table that the two cities of Rome and Jerusalem are represented with their monuments.

Also notice on the painting the representation of paradise, hell but also, and what is rarer, purgatory.

At the foot of the cross the donor Jean de Montagnac is represented on his knees with his hands joined in prayer. It is a canon of Saint-Agricol d'Avignon and chaplain of the Chartreux church for which the painting is intended.

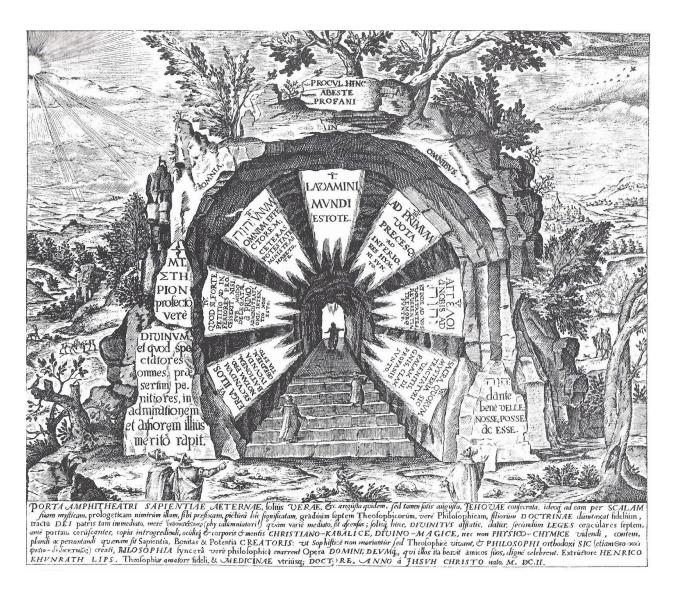
In the center, Jesus crucified on Good Friday. Because of his incarnation and his sacrifice, he is at the heart of the universe and therefore at the center of the painting.

Christ is a representation of the Stone of the Philosophers, obtained by separating the "spirit" from the "body" of the elements. It represents in fact only a part of the totality but I will come back to this aspect.

The dove at the top of course represents the holy spirit, but more broadly the dove represents the uncreated spirit that animates dead matter.

The Christian trinity in alchemy can be read as the union of the fertilizing or masculine principle with the receiving or feminine principle by the bond of the Spirit, that is to say Mercury.

The virgin in alchemy often represents the quintessence or the ether, that is to say the essence of the "4", whether it is *four elements* or *four psychological functions* . (See article **Four Functions**) [http://aquapermanens.blogspot.fr/2012/04/quatre-fonctions.html]



[http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-jn6tspLZfg0/UvzZQITFzTl/AAAAAAAAHTc/33przQdY91A/s1600/Heinrich+Khunrath+-+Amphitheatrum+sapientia+aeternae+-+1602+-+Image+8.jpeg]

"Amphitheatrum sapientia aeternae" – " Amphitheater of Eternal Wisdom " Heinrich Khunrath - 1602- Picture 8

Let's look at the image above:

Here is a representation of a passage: **the door to the Amphitheater** of Wisdom. It is a mystical ladder whose seven steps represent the different stages that the adept must climb to reach the Divine Light of Revelation. Notice that the door is quite narrow. It is, according to *Heinrich Khunrath*, to manage to pierce the Ultimate Mystery and to reach immortality, at the eternal center of Life.

This is the starting point of the Kabbalistic edifice of Alchemy.

The inscription above the door warns the layman not to approach.

On the left is written: "A truly divine Mystery which justly claims the love and admiration of all who enter it."

Around the door seven recommendations are indicated:

- 1. "Wash and be clean.
- 2. May the creator lord of all things and the powers that serve him be with you.
- 3. Wishes and prayers should be addressed to the Creator, and hymns to the powers that serve him.
- 4. If the request is first addressed to these lower powers, it is because of the delegation of power they receive from the Lord.
- 5. May the fear and reverence of God be messenger Angels flying from us to the Lord and back to us.
- 6. May obedience to the Angels be joyful by virtue of the experience received.
- 7. The Sacred Mysteries you are about to study are revealed to those who deserve it, and remain hidden from the profane."

An inscription on the right adds: "With the help of the Lord, to will, to know, to be able and to be."



[http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-P4D_3Gzq7V4/UuJPCZChKpl/AAAAAAAHLo/qw6kfkQl7ds/s1600/Aurora+Consurgens+-+Illustration+39+-+Le+Philosophe+devant+la+porte.jpeg]

Aurora Consurgens - published in 1410
"The philosopher before the door"

Let's look at the image above:

The philosopher stands in front of the gate of a fortified house. It is indeed a stronghold, that is to say the inner core of the being. He holds a key in his right hand.

This philosopher is perhaps the Arab alchemist of the 10th century, *Umaïl at-Tamimi*, who here enters the casket of wisdom, the Lapis, whose four doors, that of the four elements, open with the four keys..

Behind the alchemist a tree which is adorned at its base with a golden crown. This tree and its crown represent the place of rooting of our art and indicates its royal and sovereign character.



[http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-8sjntH6CfWc/ULUeqxQxONI/AAAAAAAAACRI/O933_IIxOP4/s1600/Aurora+Consurgens+-+Fin+XIV%C2%B0+si%C3%A8cle.jpg]

Aurora Consurgens - XIVth century

To finish a little quote from Angelus Silesus:

"Man, you only have to go into yourself. For to find the Philosopher's Stone, there is no need to go to distant lands." ("The Cherubic Journey" - page 234)

Thank you forreadingGood magisterium!

Posted 1st December 2012 by L'alchimiste

add a comment

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